

## Shot In The Dark by red\_crate

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** Gen, M/M

**Language:** English

**Relationships:** Billy Hargrove & Steve Harrington, Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2018-09-29

**Updated:** 2018-09-29

**Packaged:** 2022-04-23 02:42:35

**Rating:** Not Rated

**Warnings:** No Archive Warnings Apply

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 1,777

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

Something in him won't let it go, doesn't want to let Billy disappear into his empty house again with his red eyes and tender looking cheek— not yet.

## Shot In The Dark

### Author's Note:

This week I fell into this ship. I wanted to write a little something to work through my feelings, but I don't think this fic satisfied urge. Mostly because this ended up a lot less slashy than I intended.

I don't really know what to do with this, so here.

Can be read as simply platonic, but I view it more pre-slash.

After laying on the horn twice and getting nothing, Steve is about to say *fuck it*. He should leave, and when Dustin inevitably bitches at him about it, he'll explain that he wasn't going to wait around forever. Max usually gets a ride from Billy. She'd asked Steve to pick her up this time though, something about Billy being grounded. But Steve isn't going to sit with the engine idling for ten freaking minutes to wait on her to get in.

Looking at the modest white house with a patchy yard and Billy's camaro parked on the packed dirt pull-off next to the driveway, Steve's stomach does a weird little flip and anxiety unfurls suddenly. Unsourced guilt builds in his chest. He can knock once, just to make sure Max is okay—make sure she is just ditching the plans she made with the guys and that there's nothing keeping her from answering the door.

So he gets out of his car and shoves his hands in the pockets of his bomber jacket as he walks up to the front door. It's early January, and winter has firmly set its anchor in Hawkins. He can see his breath puffing in the air, feel the sting of the chill against his cheeks even though it's been less than a minute since he left the warmth of the car.

Once he's at the door, he can hear the thrum of muffled music

coming from somewhere deeper in the house. Probably Billy blasting one of his hair band songs as he does...whatever it is he does when he doesn't have an audience to perform for or anyone to taunt. Steve pounds his fist against the door to make sure the sound carries over the music—maybe that's why Max didn't come flying out of the house like she's prone to do. He waits a few beats, trying to see through the veiled window on the door, then he knocks a little more insistently.

A shadow appears, moving faster and getting larger. Steve takes an unconscious step backwards when the door is jerked open.

“What,” Billy asks flatly, threat in his tone. He registers that Steve is standing on the stoop, and Steve watches as an unknown emotion flickers across Billy's features until it settles into lowered brows and a mean little frown. “She's not here. Susan and my dad went off with her.”

Steve reaches out before he realizes what he's doing to stop Billy from slamming the door dismissively. “Hey—” His voice catches in his throat, words cut off as his brain catches up to what happening.

Billy is looking anywhere but directly at Steve. It gives Steve a chance to note the red rims of Billy's eyes, the splotchy pink to his cheeks and across the end of his nose. There's also what might be a blossoming bruise against one cheekbone.

“Fuck off,” Billy commands, voice a little scratchy but firm nonetheless. “Go play house with your gaggle of freaks.”

The insult doesn't affect him, never really does. After all they've been through, he feels like he and the kids are bonded. There's just some shit you can't go through together without needing to cling to each other because no one else will understand. Anyway, the kids are sometimes annoying, but they're likeable. He likes who he is now that he has them in his life.

One of those same things he likes about himself—that he realizes he is capable of now—is what keeps his hand on the door and propels his body forward enough to ask, “You okay?” His question comes out all apprehensive. He might be empathetic, but this is still Billy Hargrove. Steve is mildly annoyed with himself for being moved

enough to ask.

Billy bares his teeth in what is shaped like a smile. "Peachy," he snarls, finally meeting Steve's eyes for the first time since he opened the door. "I said fuck off."

Steve gets his foot in the door, winces when Billy pushes it closed enough that the edge digs into the side of Steve's sneaker. Billy could shove Steve out, if he really wanted, so Steve asks, "Where'd they go?"

He doesn't really care, but the guys will interrogate Steve when he shows up at Will's without Max. Then they'll bitch about her ditching them without radioing or even calling any of them. He asks though, because something in him won't let it go, doesn't want to let Billy disappear into his empty house again with his red eyes and tender looking cheek— not yet.

"I don't fucking know or care, Harrington." Billy huffs through his nose. "She's not here."

"Okay, cool," Steve nods, nonchalant, "It's okay if I come in for a sec, then, right? It's fucking freezing out here."

He knows it doesn't make sense, *he* isn't making sense to himself. But he shoves in, past Billy who has a second where he is surprised by the question. Steve sweeps his eyes around the living room as he turns around to face Billy again. The room is pretty basic with a couch and recliner, a TV. The weight bench pushed into the corner looks a little out of place, but it isn't surprising to see. The music is louder now, still pounding and wafting back from a bedroom, from what must be Billy's room. When his gaze lands back on Billy, he notes the crossed arms and how it makes his already sizable biceps look bigger. He's wearing a tee with the sleeves cut off and the sides ripped apart so his ribs peek out with the gesture. Steve questions his every decision in from the last five minutes. But he's here now, so he's got to roll with it.

"Do you know when they'll be back?" Steve asks, shoulders bunching and fists clenching inside his jacket pockets. "Dustin and them are gonna flip out if I can't give them some basic info when I show up

without Max.” He rolls his eyes like it’s a hassle, but he can’t help the fond tilt to his mouth.

Billy scoffs. “That’s really not my fucking problem, asshole.” His face is clearing up though, the pink splotches on his cheeks are fading and his eyes look a little clearer. “I didn’t invite you over. Max *isn’t here* . What the fuck are you still doing here? I got shit to do.”

Steve shrugs. He doesn’t know why he’s still there but, “You get into a scrap? It’s a little early for fist fights, ain’t it?” He glances down at Billy’s knuckles. They don’t look bruised or cut.

“Yeah, I got a busy schedule though, so I start first thing,” Billy sneers, turning his head so the bruising cheek is less visible.

Steve’s stomach twists, feeling kind of sick. Billy isn’t really the kind of guy who keeps tight lipped about his conquests—in the sack or in the street—so his avoidance is telling enough. At nine in the morning, Steve can’t help but notice the source of that fresh bruise must be from an incredibly small pool of suspects.

Closing the distance between them, with his heart hammering in his chest, Steve finds himself asking, “What’d you do?” The words come out more like a whisper, tight from his constricted throat.

He knows what it feels like to want to— to *need* to— hit Billy. Billy is an asshole, and he goads Steve enough to have felt the fire light under his skin. Billy deserves to be punched when he’s gone too far, but.

But Steve isn’t cool with Billy’s *dad* being the one to do it. It’s too...it makes Steve feel cold all over.

A humorless laugh pushes out of Billy, and he cuts his eyes over to Steve. “Nothing,” he speaks just as quietly, voice deep and leaving the hair on the back of Steve’s neck standing on end.

Steve doesn’t know if Billy means he did nothing or if he’s deflecting, but the expression on Billy’s face is bleak. He watches Billy’s jaw work as he clenches it.

After Steve misses his cue, Billy exhales and drops his arms to his

sides. “We done now?”

They should be. There's a bunch of kids waiting for Steve to show up at Will's with Max. Steve should get out of here, away from the depressing sight of Billy and all his fucked-upness. He knows he'll feel a little sick about it all weekend when he thinks back to it. He'll wonder if it's a regular thing or if it's a first. He'll wonder if Billy's dad hits Max—even fleetingly thinking about that makes him want to grab his bat—or his step mom. Steve will have all those thoughts this weekend, and if he leaves right now, he'll feel like he should have done something.

He makes to leave, crossing towards the door and toward Billy. Instead of reaching for the knob when Billy moves aside to let him by, Steve's hand lifts and his fingertips brush against Billy's cheek. Billy freezes.

“You should ice this,” his voice sounds weird, rough.

Billy lifts his chin, pulling away from Steve's touch until his fingertips drag down to his jaw, but he doesn't do more than look at Steve with hard eyes. “Don't touch me,” he warns, tongue wetting his lips in preparation for a fight.

It's ridiculous. Billy's the one always touching Steve, in his space, and getting under his skin just for the fun of pissing Steve off.

“You could tell someone. Hopper—the police chief...” Steve finds himself offering a solution, ignoring Billy's demand. He doesn't know why he traces his fingers along the barely there stubble on Billy's chin.

Billy's eyelids flutter, rolling his eyes as he turns his face away again, away from Steve's touch. “Sure,” he says like he's just humoring Steve. He looks back at Steve when Steve's hand drops away. “There's nothing to tell.”

Steve holds Billy's gaze for a long moment, until he understands Billy isn't going to say anything else.

He shrugs in his jacket, resetting it on his shoulders as he sighs.

“Okay,” he nods like they're agreeing. He still doesn't feel *good* about any of it, but he tried. He tried to help.

“Tell Max to let someone know if she has to cancel next time,” Steve says. “The guys are gonna be annoying about this.”

Billy leans back against the wall next to the wall, exhales like he's relieved for the subject change. “Tell her yourself.”

Steve rolls his eyes, and mumbles to himself as he opens the door, “Why do I even bother?”

### **Author's Note:**

If you wanna come hang out with me on Tumblr, I'm [here](#).

Comment if you enjoyed this, please!